

Minutes of the USHA Winter Board Meeting,
January 22,23, 2022.

Saturday January 22, 2022

President Martin opened the meeting at 8:02 am, MST at the Hampton Suites in Tucson, AZ. The meeting was conducted both in-person and virtually via Zoom. Present in person were President Martin, Secretary Tom Sove, board members Carl Porter, Rob Nichols, Terry Nett, Rob Birrell, and Nick White. Present virtually were Vice President Denis Hogan, Treasurer Steve Birrell, board members Jared Vale, Tracy Eubanks, Ben Van Arsdale, Alethia Mendez-Caba, Ralph Fregoso and Kyle Kloss. Quinn Foley assigned his proxy vote to Kyle Kloss. Also attending in person was Executive Director Matt Krueger.

Martin introduced and welcomed new board members Rob Birrell, Southeast Region, and Nick White, Northwest Region. She welcomed returning board members Tom Sove, Northern California/Nevada Region.

Time was allotted to review the minutes from 2021 Summer board meeting in September. **Nett moved to approve the minutes from the summer board meeting. Nichols seconded. The motion passed 15-0-1.** Director Porter was absent for this vote, resulting in the abstention.

Martin reviewed the consensus model of this board wherein directors are welcome to disagree in session, but should publicly support the board's decisions as decided by majority vote. A director may request his/her dissenting stance to be so noted in the minutes. It is also expected directors will always respect others and conduct themselves responsibly during the meeting.

Martin asked the board members and staff to introduce themselves and share what they've done to grow handball and/or the USHA since the last meeting. Members shared such information as the extent to which handball was being played in their areas, garnering new memberships, and efforts keeping the lines of communications open in their area.

Martin asked for names of those planning to run for an officer's position. Thus far, there is Hogan for president, Vale for vice president, Sove for secretary, and S. Birrell for treasurer.

This was followed by a review of Board decisions and Executive Committee decisions made since the last board meeting.

Board Decisions:

- Move the National Doubles to Atlanta, Nov. 11-13 and National Four-Wall Juniors to Tucson, Dec. 27-30.
- Temporary exception to the two-candidate minimum for the Northern CA / NV Regional election.
- Approve the Collegiate Eligibility Updates.
- Establish Fund for the George Lee Invitational
- Hold a "hybrid" 2022 Winter Board Meeting (in-person and virtual) for those who do not wish to travel.

Executive Committee Decisions:

- USHA moves forward with the National Doubles in Atlanta and agrees to following State and Community Health Guidelines and reserves the right to cancel concerning changes to the health and wellness environment

- Accept an anonymous donation of \$10K for the cooperative effort with the WPH for the 2021-22 R48Pro Season
- Host a combined Four-Wall Nationals at the Multnomah AC (Portland, OR), June 15-19 and the Women's Classic at the University of Texas (Austin), April 1-3
- Voted for Executive Director, on behalf of the USHA, to make the presentation remotely at the World Wallball Association's General Assembly in October.

President's Report: Martin stated it has been an honor to serve as president these past six years and noted how time went either fast, or slow for her. She feels the board has grown as a group, and handball as a sport. Her strategic planning consisting of each committee setting goals has helped in giving focus, and she is gratified to see overlap and cooperation between committees. She mentioned her monthly updates, and her requests for timely evaluations of herself. She has tried to show appreciation to our volunteers by sending thank you cards and other communication. She is happy the board continues sponsoring a staff lunches throughout the year. She hopes her "what have I done to grow handball and the USHA" session at the beginning and end of each board meeting continues. She is pleased our relations with other organizations, primarily the WPH, have improved to the point they are our partners now and we need to promote that, to let the handball population know of our union. Regarding other organizations, the USHA collaborations with USA Racquetball have included identifying possible sites for tournaments, co-authoring articles for a fitness club publication, contacting other organizations played on 20x40 courts, etc. The collaboration with the NAIA may not prove fruitful since they work only with schools within the NAIA. Our relations with Canada and Ireland handball associations remain solid. She is pleased her efforts to develop a protocol in which inactive board members may be addressed was approved. She finished by thanking the board, as she could not have been president without board support.

Treasurer's Report: Birrell started with a review of Schedule C, our balance sheet. Of note, he spoke to efforts to keep cash balances in various accounts lower. Also, an anonymous donor provided funds to be used as a back-stop for wherever they can be helpful in balancing our budget. Further, these funds are designated to be invested in an aggressive instrument. Each of the accounts were reviewed in order. Of special note is ball sales dropped in 2020 but came back positively in 2021, whereas membership dropped a bit. Also, the Endowment and Mardak Scholarship Funds had positive investment results. Last, another anonymous donor endowed a Wellness Fund for use for staff emergency issues as needed. Birrell suggested the funds be invested rather than held in cash. Overall, we did not have a bad year, but, as usual, at this time in the board meeting our budget is not balanced.

Game Committee: Sove gave the Game Committee report starting with the ONE ball situation. As was the case last year we are unable to move forward on deciding on a commitment of this ball until such time as we can disseminate the ball to a statistically large enough population to garner meaningful feedback from our membership. The problem with receiving the balls is the current holdup in our ports. The next shipment of ONE balls hopefully will be received in March and we can move on. Discussion included the need to make a much more concerted effort to obtain feedback and to make the survey simpler. The USHA stance is we want to offer players a variety of balls and let them decide with which ball they want to play. News from ACE, LLC is they still have plans to develop a universal ball and they have a prototype coming via airmail that is 55 grams. There will be enough for board members to sample. Further news on the ONE ball is the initial jumpiness and bounce characteristics of the ball

coming immediately out of the can has been addressed. The film on the exterior has been eliminated and the surface has been ground smoother resulting in less erratic early bounces.

A subcommittee has been formed to review the Referee's Guide for updating.

The USHA will host quarterly virtual referee clinics, at least one of which shall be devoted to one wall. The intent is to start in March, 2022.

Regarding the goal of furthering eye protection education, it was resolved to continue posting mandatory eye protection notices on all courts during our national tournaments. We will commence with PSA notices in Court Shorts and the magazine showing approved eye wear manufactured for sports versus unapproved eye wear manufactured for reading. Some then requested board members to be much more active in assisting in identifying and reminding players found to be in violation of our "eye guards required at all times on the court even during warm up" protocol at our national tournaments. All agreed.

The next topic was a change in the Women's Classic format for the April, 2022 event in Austin, TX. The proposal is for a trial run with two separate divisions, each conducting their own drop-down format. The idea is to provide more competitive competition from the outset. There will be an Open/A division, using the red label ball exclusively, and a B/Novice division, using the white label ball exclusively. Players may enter only one of the divisions. Discussion included comments on the great experience of the Women's Classic, including the diversity of players, not only in proficiency but geographically; perhaps this format may increase interest in competing on a more even level at the outset; noting this format may put more pressure on the need for courts the higher the number of entrants becomes; board members have heard chatter that newer female players would prefer to play among their peers (proficiency-wise); if we were to consider a change in format it is best to do it now rather than talk about it later; and our new Women's Commissioner is doing a good job and we should support her in any way possible. **Van Arsdale moved to approve the Women's Classic format change for 2022 as presented. Mendez-Caba seconded.** Further discussion required divisions to be monitored using our accepted skill/sand bagging protocols, and that this will be a one-time experiment to be revisited for next year. **The motion passed 16-0-0.**

The Game Committee dealt with seven rules issues.

The first issue was Rule 5.9 Round Robin Tiebreaker Scoring. Wording was proposed that clarifies the order the tiebreakers are to be applied for all ties, not just 3-way ties as the current wording implies. **Martin moved to accept the revised wording as presented. Nett seconded. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 15-1-0.**

The second item was Rule 4.10.E Postponed by referee. This rule was left out of the rule book in error some years ago, but it is in the one-wall addendum. This rule is applicable to four-, three- and one-wall, and therefore should be added back to the rule book, and subsequently deleted from the one-wall addendum as it no longer is needed as an addendum. Further wording was added clarifying a match may be postponed by the tournament director, not just the referee. **Porter moved to accept the change as presented. Seconded by Martin. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0.**

The third item was Rule 3.2 Chief of referees. The existing rule does not clearly define the factual responsibilities and authority of a USHA Chief of Referees; and whereas certain rules in the 3.3 and 3.4

range state some responsibilities and authority of the Chief of Referees, they are not all-inclusive. Wording was proposed clarifying authority and responsibilities as well as the referee certification level required for a Chief of Referee. **Porter moved to accept the revised wording as presented. R. Birrell seconded. Discussion centered on certain problems with finding certified referees and alternate wording was suggested. The original motion was voted on and failed 0-16-0. Porter moved to accept the modified wording. R. Birrell seconded. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0.**

The fourth rule discussed revolved around Rule 5.6, Interpretation No. 23 Coaching is allowed. Sove noted the topic of coaching is not in the rule book index and is hard to find without this reference. It was suggested that "Coaching" be added to the index. This was agreed to by consensus.

The fifth rule discussion concerned a perceived conflict in two rules. A sub committee was formed to further investigate the issue.

The sixth issue concerned Rule 3.7.C Number of Appeals in the one-wall addendum. There are various unfortunate complications arising out of the wording of this rule. To solve this a change in the wording was suggested. **Mendez-Caba moved to accept the revision as presented. Nichols seconded. Discussion centered on confirming the per-game limitation on the number of unsuccessful appeals applied to 25-point games. This was confirmed. The motion passed 16-0-0.**

The last change regarded Rule 4.6.K. Play Stoppage. Essentially the rule was amended to clarify a player stops play at his/her own risk. **S. Birrell moved to accept the change as presented. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:21 for lunch.

Martin reconvened the meeting at 1:15.

Membership Services Committee: Kloss began his report by sharing a map that exhibited the population and concentration of USHA membership across the U.S. Kloss shared that he wanted to relaunch Membership Services monthly meetings. Kloss reviewed three strategic key goals of the committee: Improving the USHA Membership experience and benefits, expanding our membership base, and retaining USHA members. He stated the USHA website has been slightly improved and is still a subject of importance. The Tournament Calendar and Court Database were features that USHA Members appreciated. Kloss emphasized wanting to thank our members and make them feel appreciated—sharing the responsibility regionally, contacting new or renewed members in respective regions. Kloss also underscored the importance of USHA-Sanctioned tournaments and highlighting our new members gained.

Investment/Endowment: Birrell once again reviewed the performance of the three investment funds, the new back-stop, Endowment, and Mardak Scholarship. He will be coordinating with a new professional investment consultant in the next month. A question arose regarding how our investment instruments have been chosen. Some are dictated by the donor, a few have been chosen by the Investment/Endowment Committee chair, and some are historical. All have been low risk and have performed well within the parameters, with the exception of one fund which is directed elsewhere by the donor.

One-Wall Committee: Mendez-Caba reported the focus of the committee right now is to grow one-wall outside New York by finding and identifying courts. There is some success in New Jersey and New England. She noted one great model in the city of Lawrence which has a large fund reserved for renovation of city courts. She attended the recent WWBA general session virtually and confirmed there is great interest in the New York Community regarding the WWBA's progression. They are more aware of international interest in wall ball and there is more conversation regarding competing in the 2022 Wall Ball nationals. The committee is still focusing on increasing the understanding of our rules, including respect for the rule, as well as increasing the number of certified referees. To this end Vale has been sending the on-line certification tests to targeted candidates. A goal for this year is to organize a regional one-wall tournament in the Tri-State area around New York. Vale indicated the committee would like to get more four-wall pros to attend the one-wall small ball national tournament. They will make efforts to raise more money to support this endeavor. Vale finished by sharing he has a friend who produces documentary films and has reached out to Vale for inside advice on handball for a potential project.

Funding / Revenue Committee: Krueger gave the report for Chair Quinn. The committee has been involved with developing a model for obtaining sponsorship for local tournaments. Krueger added we want to improve the quality of our gloves and has hopes with a new manufacturer. This product should be more competitive in terms of price and attractiveness which will correlate to more revenue. Further on the issue of gloves, Krueger continues to consult with Owen Gloves on maintaining a partnership relationship rather than competitor relationship, thus continuing to give players more equipment options. Krueger will be working with Quinn to expand revenue sources and adopt different solicitation approaches.

Collegiate Committee: This report was submitted by Chair Mike Wells and presented by Martin. The committee currently is preparing for the Collegiate National Tournament at Missouri State. The committee has been holding virtual coaches' meetings with good attendance. Regarding the committee's recent goals, they have a process in which they have touched base with coaches and programs this past year offering help in reconstituting their operations. The committee publicized scholarship opportunities, they will again have a committee meeting at the Collegiate tournament, and they implemented player recruitment grants. Goals for 2022 are to improve retention of players after graduation. They expect to collaborate with First Ace in developing a survey to determine which programs have players and what works. They will look into developing an Alumni Tournament. Nett stated retaining players may be a financial issue. He suggested matching a recent graduated player with an established local player and venue, and if possible, having the player, club, and venue cover the first year, to allow the graduate to play. If the graduate can play at least once a week perhaps we can maintain his/her involvement in handball.

Promotion Committee: Sove started by reviewing the 2022 tournament schedule. The Junior three-wall tournament potentially scheduled for Venice Beach will not occur. Krueger is seeking an alternate venue. The Master Singles and Doubles will not be held in the Spring as usual and every effort will be made to host them in the Fall of 2022. Perhaps they can be combined with another large recurring regional tournament. There was discussion perhaps the Fall will be used more often for these two tournaments.

Next was deciding on our annual Coach, Volunteer, and Organization of the Year Awards. There were nominations for each and the Awards Subcommittee presented their selections to the whole Promotion Committee which were subsequently unanimously approved. **Martin moved to approve the three selections for Coach, Volunteer, and Organization of the Year as presented by the Promotion Committee. Nichols seconded. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 15-0-1.** Krueger has the task to notify the recipients. The Awards Subcommittee membership was reconstituted.

The Promotion prize money budget line items were briefly reviewed and it was confirmed there will be no changes for tournaments in 2022. Promotion Committee goals were briefly reviewed with no changes.

First Ace: Esser joined the meeting remotely to review the First Ace grants for 2022. There were eight returning programs and two new ones. It was indicated programs have been more active this past year and all moving in positive direction. Esser disclosed the amount available for grants is nominally higher than last year. **Nett moved that the First Ace Grant recommendations for 2022 be funded as presented. Porter seconded. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0.**

Chair Hogan expressed his desire to start using state chairs and other ambassadors to further the goals of First Ace. He suggested each First Ace Committee member select a funded program to act as an advisor and liaison, to provide more direct support, and to better understand their needs when applying for future First Ace grants.

Hall of Fame: Martin gave the report for Chair Dau. The committee had success in obtaining a quorum with the help of hosting a hybrid personal/virtual meeting at the Nashville nationals. The committee presented one contributor for induction, and three players. **Vale moved to approve the Hall of Fame Committee's 2022 recommendations for induction into the Hall of Fame. Nichols seconded. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0.** Krueger has the task to notify the recipients.

Vale expressed his thoughts that the Hall of Fame criteria needs to be updated and inquired how to achieve that. It was confirmed that is a committee issue first and he should start there. On a separate but related issue, the Hall of Fame Committee directed a question to the board whether they can consider non-USA nominees for induction as a contributor. Discussion centered on the fact that depends entirely whether the contributions were made to the benefit of the USHA. A motion was not forthcoming and it was agreed by consensus this is the protocol to follow. Further discussion brought up the question if a contributor could be selected based solely on financial contributions. This was renounced by consensus, but it was suggested perhaps a new category could be developed for sponsors.

Technology Committee: the report was presented by Van Arsdale who started with a review of the committee goal to adopt video instructionals. He discussed the new Court Map on the web site indicating there are 500 courts identified and that it still needs more updating. The members-only page is still in test mode. Updating the web site is still a target. He admires Jeff Wall's apps, saying there are lots of fun tools in them. A committee goal for 2022 is to improve the USHA app, which is currently inactive.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 for a break.

The meeting reconvened at 3:30.

Planning Committee: The summer board meeting was the first subject discussed. While the rotation would have us in New York this year, it was suggested we go to Portland in conjunction with the four-wall nationals. This could potentially be the last time we could meet at a united singles/doubles tournament for a while and gives the board opportunity to attend the Hall of Fame induction ceremony. The board meeting would be held June 14, with committee meeting held virtually in the days preceding. We would prioritize New York in 2023 as this is the second consecutive year we altered the rotation. This was agreed to by consensus.

This was followed by a lengthy discussion on adopting the strategic plan of the WWBA. Martin specified the USHA initially abstained from voting to adopt the plan pending a review by the USHA board. The board reviewed the plan in depth, considering the policies, mission, approach and articulation of the document. Further consideration regarded the USHA'S place in the future of wall ball and the ramifications of our actions at this time. **Porter moved that the USHA not adopt the current WWBA Strategic Plan and abstain involvement until conditions change. R. Birrell seconded. Discussion centered on our acknowledgement of the basic principles of the strategic plan and the importance of future USHA involvement. The motion passed 16-0-0.** A method of communicating this decision was formulated.

Martin interrupted the meeting for some housekeeping announcements including handball pairings, dinner orders, passing the hat for the staff lunch, and the board photo op at the end of the meeting.

Personnel: Chair Nett informed the board the new Personnel Guideline manual is in its' final draft and will be sent to the board for approval shortly. We will vote to approve it via email. Nett has arranged for an outside expert to review the efficiency of our office, to be conducted this summer. This will be gratis, except for travel expenses. The committee will develop guidelines for the new employee Wellness Fund. Fund raising and development training for staff will be conducted at board expense, and Nett will proceed to get a line item in the First Ace budget for this expense. Nett then reviewed the board evaluation of our Executive Director, followed by the staff evaluation of our Executive Director. Executive Director Krueger was excused from the meeting. A salary and/or bonus structure for 2022 was discussed and agreed upon. **Martin moved to approve the Personnel Committee's recommendations for staff compensation for 2022. Nichols seconded. During discussion it was suggested for next year that goals be set for bonuses, if applicable. The motion passed 16-0-0.**

The Saturday meeting was adjourned at 4:59pm.

Sunday, January 23, 2022

The Meeting reconvened at 8:31 am MST, also virtually via Zoom. Present in person were President Martin, Secretary Tom Sove, board members Carl Porter, Rob Nichols, Terry Nett, Rob Birrell, and Nick White. Present virtually were Vice President Denis Hogan, Treasurer Steve Birrell, board members Jared Vale, Tracy Eubanks, Ben Van Arsdale, Alethia Mendez-Caba, Ralph Fregoso and Kyle Kloss. Quinn Foley assigned his proxy vote to Kyle Kloss. Also attending in person was Executive Director Matt Krueger.

Martin started the meeting with a few housekeeping announcements.

Treasurer Birrell initiated discussion of the budget, including membership revenue, ball sales, payroll, national tournaments, and magazine costs. Revenue discussion centered on the lack of 2022 PP funds, and the availability of ELF income in excess of the 4% threshold. There is the possibility we could qualify for federal Employee Retention Credits this year. Each of the nine separate Funds was reviewed and Birrell disclosed we had a balanced budget. **Mendez-Caba moved to approve the budget as presented by Treasurer Birrell. Porter seconded. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0.**

Board Nominating Committees were formed. The At-Large directors expiring this year are S. Birrell and Fregoso. The nominating committee will be comprised of Mendez-Caba, Martin and Van Arsdale. They will be tasked with developing a slate of candidates for election at the summer board meeting. Regional directors expiring are Vale, Northeast, Nichols, Southern California, and Eubanks, Southwest. The nominating chairs are R. Birrell for Northeast, Sove for Southern California, and Hogan for Southwest. These chairs will be tasked for developing a slate of candidates for election in the fall, with a deadline of September 15, 2022 to obtain candidacy statements for publication.

Officers' elections were conducted next. Hogan ran for President, Vale ran for Vice President, Sove ran for Secretary, and S. Birrell ran for Treasurer. All were unopposed. Campaign statements were given orally. **Nett moved to accept the slate and approve it by acclamation. White seconded. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0.**

The board turned to forming the remainder of the Executive Committee. Three members were required. Running were Porter, Martin, and Nichols. All were unopposed. **R. Birrell moved to accept the slate and approve it by acclamation. Mendez-Caba seconded. No further discussion ensued. The motion passed 16-0-0.**

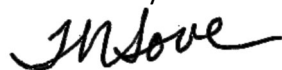
Each committee was updated. The new listing will be posted on the website.

Martin asked the board members to share what they plan to do to grow handball and the USHA before the next meeting.

Martin gave her parting remarks, reiterating her personal goal to garner six new members every year. She had a wonderful and positive experience being president. She thanked the board for letting her serve as president and expressed confidence in our new leadership.

Martin adjourned the meeting at 10:04 am MST.

Submitted by



Tom Sove

Secretary

February 3, 2022